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ALFRED AGLER: Thank you. My name is Alfred Agler, and I am the Director of Transportation for the Ohio Public Utility Commission. The PUCO will be the agency designated by the governor to work on the preferred route issue that you've heard earlier tonight. I appeared at the earlier proceeding this afternoon and presented some prepared testimony and summarized that for the audience. I'd like to do the same thing tonight, just briefly, to hit on some of the high points about the Commission and about the Commission's role. The first thing I would like to do is I would like to commend the DOE for this series of meetings that they've had around the country on this very critical public policy issue that is going to be with us for many, many years.

As you've heard tonight in the presentation, there are still a lot of questions; technical, legal, and political questions that have to be resolved and at this point in time it's not even a certainty that these movements will actually take place. The Commission's position on this is very simple. The Commission believes that if these shipments are to be made at all, then it is critical that these shipments be made in the very safest manner possible to protect the citizens of Ohio.

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Given the uncertain state of affairs, it's very difficult to get into a lot of detail and respond in detail. But there are a few general points that I think need to be made. First of all the Commission is going to have three primary responsibilities with respect to this activity. The first of these is that we're going to be responsible for ensuring that these shipments are made in compliance with all the existing federal motor carrier safety regulations for motor carriers, the railroad safety regulations and also the hazardous material safety regulations that cover both modes of transportation.

As the agency that is responsible for supervising both of those modes of transportation that would be foreseeably used in this activity, we have experienced personnel and we have an active program that is involved in inspecting at roadside locations, track locations and other facilities of these carriers.

The second major component of our work is that we must ensure that the routes that are going to be used minimize the potential risk to the public and the environment. And we have begun on that task already. We, this fall, presented a grant to the Ohio State University to begin preliminary work as to how to attack the problem, how to analyze these possible routes, the factors to be looked at and other public policy considerations that should go into that. We intend to, eventually, at the appropriate time involve the local communities in this process. And I would just comment in that regard as far as the routing itself, that the Commission is going to follow two principles in carrying out its responsibilities.

The first is that we will insist on an involvement of all the local communities that are involved in a routing decision and we will meet -- we will not leave a community out in helping us to arrive at that decision. The kind of the flip side of that is, we will also not permit a route to be established merely to export the risk into a neighboring community and we will insist that whatever routes are finally designed, are those that minimize the total risk and exposure in the movement.

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The final component of this is the fact that we intend to work with the local communities on emergency response. We have funding programs to help local communities to train their emergency responders. We work with the Cleveland State University in its HAZMAT program and we will continue to fund these efforts and ensure that all local communities have the necessary training for their response efforts.

The final point that I would make is, that it is our intention and our expectation that the DOE will not only provide adequate funding to assist us in this effort, but they will also complete their work and give us sufficient time to put that training in place and to ensure that these movements are made in a safe manner. So with that, thank you very much.